

NASA KENNEDY SPACE CENTER
Pathways Internship Employment Program Guidance

Name:

I. GENERAL:

The National Aeronautics and Space Administration's (NASA) Kennedy Space Center (KSC) has set the following guidance as a supplement to the requirements set forth by the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) provided in the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 5 CFR part 362, subpart A, which addresses the overarching requirements for the Pathways Programs. This guidance specifically addresses the Pathways Internship Employment Program (IEP).

The purpose of this program is to provide students the opportunity to gain hands-on experience. This program is also used as a tool for KSC to strategically plan for future workforce needs.

KSC provides two different opportunities for Pathways Internships:

1. Temporary
2. Permanent

Under both opportunities students are considered federal employees of NASA Kennedy Space Center and are appointed under the same authority.

KSC also provides two different work schedules for Pathways Internships:

1. Traditional
2. Non-Traditional

II. DEFINITIONS:

- A. **Student:** A student is someone enrolled in or accepted for enrollment in a degree seeking program at a qualifying educational institution on a full or half-time basis.
- B. **Temporary:** A Temporary Internship is an opportunity that usually lasts no longer than 89 days, but may be extended for 1 year increments. These opportunities have a defined not to exceed (NTE) date. Temporary interns are not eligible for non-competitive conversion to full-time permanent appointments.
- C. **Permanent:** A Permanent Internship is expected to last more than one year. After completion the academic degree program, Permanent interns are eligible for non-competitive conversion to a full-time permanent appointment. This type of internship is very similar to what many academic institutions call "cooperative education" opportunities.
- D. **Traditional:** At KSC, students with this schedule type rotate semesters between work and school. One semester at work and one semester at school throughout their matriculation.
- E. **Non-Traditional:** At KSC, students with this schedule type work full-time throughout the year and take courses at night or online. This type of scheduling is

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generally reserved for non-engineering positions and based on the work available within a specific directorate at KSC.

III. RECRUITMENT, SELECTION, & PLACEMENT:

A. Highest Grade of Eligibility: KSC refers applicants at the grade for which they are eligible in order to properly plan the graduation dates of incoming students to coincide with future workforce needs.

B. Applicants*:

- Students must be able to complete a minimum 640 hours of work, typically achieved in two work terms in order to be eligible for conversion therefore in order to be appointed to a KSC Pathways Intern position a student must
 - i. Have at least one year of academic study (two semesters or four quarters) remaining before completing degree requirements at the start date.
- Applicants to Pathways Intern positions will be rendered not qualified if:
 - i. Basic program eligibility requirements are not met (i.e. GPA, school enrollment, and degree accreditation)
 - ii. Position eligibility requirements are not met (i.e. major)
 - iii. The graduation date stated on his/her resume is prior to the planned start date indicated in the corresponding vacancy announcement
 - iv. Transcripts, acceptance letter, and veterans documents (if applicable) are not submitted per the announcement instructions

IV. PROVISIONS OF EMPLOYMENT:

A. Participant Agreements: All Interns must sign a Pathways Intern Participant Agreement within the first week of employment. This Agreement includes:

- Description of duties
- Work Schedule
- Length of appointment and termination date
- Mentorship opportunities
- Training requirements
- Performance evaluation
- Requirements for continuation in and successful completion of the program
- Minimum requirements for non-competitive conversion to full-time permanent appointment

B. Work Terms & Schedules:

- Work terms are defined as a period of time worked at KSC. This is typically equivalent to one semester or one quarter.
 1. Spring work terms are generally January – May (5 months)
 2. Summer work terms are generally May – August (4 months)
 3. Fall work terms are generally August – December (5months)

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- Students must be able to complete a minimum 640 hours of work, achieved in two work terms prior to completing degree requirements.
- Work schedule must be negotiated and approved by the intern's supervisor, and in coordination with the KSC Pathways Program Manager.
- Students or supervisors may request back-to-back work terms, but approval is dependent on funding availability and subject to coordination with the Pathways Program Manager.
- Changes from traditional to non-traditional schedule types are at the discretion of the supervisor and is dependent on funding availability and subject to coordination with the Pathways Program Manager.
- Requests for extended Leave without Pay (LWOP) or non-work terms, beyond the standard 1 (one) calendar year will be requested in writing and subject to approval by the supervisor in coordination with the Pathways Program Manager. It is KSC's policy that interns receive no more than one (1) approval for extended LWOP during the duration of their internship.

C. Transcripts/Grade Point Average (GPA):

- An intern must show proof that he/she is maintaining a cumulative GPA of at least a 2.9 by providing KSC with complete transcripts after completing each semester or quarter. Furthermore an intern must provide these transcripts within two weeks of returning to work at KSC. Complete transcripts must clearly indicate the student's name, university name, major, degree level, GPA, and total credit hours.
- Interns are required to notify the KSC Pathways Program Manager within one week of grade posting for the most recent semester if his/her overall GPA falls below a 2.9 on a 4.0 scale. This notification must be provided in writing. At this time the intern may be deemed ineligible for continuation in the Pathways Program and therefore may be terminated.
- In accordance with the NASA Implementation Guide to the Pathways Programs Section 4.4 an academic improvement period to raise a GPA may be extended by the employing Center. KSC reserves the right to offer an improvement period for students. Typical academic improvement periods are 2 semesters for both traditional and non-traditional interns.
- Students may request an academic improvement period to raise the GPA. Such requests should be made in writing, including sufficient justification, to support their request to the Pathways Program Manager, and are subject to supervisory approval. Students are not guaranteed an academic improvement period.
- Students are responsible for submitting transcripts for promotion eligibility. Submitted transcripts are used as a trigger for promotion eligibility reviews by the KSC Pathways Program Manager. Reference *Section IV-E*

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D. Promotions:

- Promotions are based upon meeting educational qualifications (i.e. the number of semester/quarter hours successfully completed), academic performance, work performance and the supervisory approval.
- KSC requires graduate students to complete 1 year of graduate level education (the equivalent to half of the academic credits required to complete the degree program) and 1 year of work (2080 hours) at the next lower grade in order to be eligible for a promotion.
- Promotions are not retroactive, meaning promotions are not backdated.
- Promotions will not be granted for students placed on an academic improvement period.

V. CONVERSIONS/TERMINATIONS

A. Terminations:

- A Permanent Intern's appointment expires at the end of the 120 day period after the conferral of his/her degree. A Temporary Intern's appointment expires on the established Not to Exceed (NTE) Date.
- Pathways Program participants are not guaranteed conversion to competitive service upon completion of all educational requirements. Conversion is contingent upon staffing and budgetary restraints.
- The reasons for termination vary, but the most common reasons for termination of interns include any of the following: poor work performance, misconduct, failure to maintain program eligibility.
- If an intern fails to meet any of the requirements outlined in this guidance or the participant agreement, management reserves the right to terminate the appointment at any time.

B. Conversion Eligibility:

- In order to be eligible for non-competitive conversion to a full-time permanent appointment an intern must:
 1. Be a United States citizen
 2. Successfully complete his/her academic course of study and provide proof that his/her degree was conferred
 3. *Have a cumulative GPA of 2.90 on a 4.00*
 4. Complete a minimum of 640 hours of work experience under the Internship Program while enrolled in a degree seeking program.
 5. Meet all OPM and NASA qualification standards for the position to which the intern may be converted
 6. Receive a favorable recommendation for conversion from his/her supervisor
 7. Be at least a fully successful or equivalent level of performance on the final performance evaluation prior to conversion.

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8. Be converted to the competitive service no later than 120 days after completion of all degree requirements.
 9. Complete a student showcase presentation prior to completion of academic course of study.
 10. Complete IDP training/development Phase 1-2
- Meeting the conversion eligibility requirements does not guarantee employment with NASA upon graduation.

*Indicates information that will be clearly provided in the public notice (job announcement)

Participant Name:

Position Title: Student Trainee - Pathways Internship Employment Program Participant

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT:

I have reviewed the KSC Pathways Internship Employment Program Guidance and the conditions related to continued employment and I accept the provisions.

Participant Printed Name: _____

Participant Signature: _____ Date: _____

Matrix Supervisor Signature: _____ Date: _____

Supervisor of Record Signature: _____ Date: _____

Program Manager Signature: _____ Date: _____